

SELECTBOARD PROCEDURAL RULES

I. Purpose

The Selectboard of the Town of Fairlee is required by law to conduct its meetings in accordance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law. 1 V.S.A. § 310-314. Meetings of the Selectboard of the Town of Fairlee must be open to the public at all times, except as provided in 1 V.S.A. § 313. At such meetings, the public must be afforded a reasonable opportunity to give its opinion on matters considered by the Selectboard so long as order is maintained. Such public comment is subject to the reasonable rules established by the Chair of the Selectboard. 1 V.S.A. § 312(h).

II Application

This policy setting forth Procedural Rules for Selectboard meetings shall apply to all regular, special, and emergency meetings of the Town of Fairlee.

III Meetings

A. Regular Scheduled Meetings. The Selectboard shall meet every Monday in the Town Hall. At the first meeting following Town Meeting, a Chair will be elected, and re-adoption of this policy will be conducted.

B. Special Meetings. A Special Meeting may be called at any time in accordance with 1 V.S.A § 312(c)(2). The time, place and purpose of a special meeting shall be publicly announced at least 24 hours before the meeting.

C. Emergency Meetings. An Emergency Meeting may be called at any time in accordance with 1 V.S.A § 312(c)(3). Emergency meetings may be held without public announcement, without posting notices and without 24-hour notice to members, provided some public notice thereof is given as soon as possible before any such meeting. Emergency meetings may be held only when necessary to respond to an unforeseen occurrence or condition requiring immediate attention by the Selectboard.

D. Public Notice. The Town Administrator will be responsible for providing proper public notice in accordance with Title 1 V.S.A § 312(c)(1). An agenda will be posted at the Town Hall, Post Office, Library, and posted to the Fairlee Town website for public access.

IV Procedures

A. Agenda. Each Selectboard meeting shall have an agenda, with time allotted for each item of business to be considered by the Selectboard. Those who wish to be added to the meeting agenda shall contact the Town Administrator to request inclusion on the agenda. The Selectboard Chair shall determine the final content of the agenda. By majority vote, the Chair may also adjust the agenda at the time of the meeting, as necessary.

B. Conduct of Meeting. The Chair of the Selectboard, or in the Chair's absence, the Vice-Chair will conduct the meeting. At least two board members must be present to constitute a quorum. Otherwise, a meeting may not be held.

C. Public Comment. At the beginning of each Selectboard meeting, there shall be time afforded for open public comment(s), unless there is a specific agenda item needing to be scheduled. By majority vote, the Chair may increase the time for open public comment time and may adjust the agenda items and times accordingly. The Chair shall rule on all questions of order and procedure and shall enforce these rules as required by 1 V.S.A. § 312 (h). The Chair may call to order any person who is being disorderly by speaking or otherwise disrupting the meeting, by failing to be germane, by speaking longer than the allotted time, or by speaking vulgarities. Such person shall thereupon be seated until the Chair shall have determined whether the person is in order. If there is a potential or apparent breach of peace, the Chair shall request the constable to be present and take appropriate action. No person shall be removed, or excluded from a public meeting except for an actual breach of peace committed at the meeting. Public comment on issues discussed by the Selectboard, if not offered during the open public comment period, may be offered during the meeting with permission of the Chair.

D. Motions. Motions will be made, seconded and voted on all pertinent matters of discussion requiring decisions or issues requiring signatures.

E. Matters on the agenda that were not acted upon at the time of adjournment will be placed on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled meeting.

F. Minutes. Minutes of all meetings shall be taken in accordance with 1 V.S.A. § 312(b). They shall cover all topics and motions that arise and give a true indication of the business of the meeting.

(1) Minutes must include at least:

(a) all Selectboard members present or absent, and other active participants and visitors;

(b) all motions, proposals and resolutions made, offered and considered, and their disposition;

(c) and the results of all votes.

(2) Minutes of all public meeting are matters of Public Record, shall be kept by the Town Clerk, and must be available for inspection and purchase of copies, at cost, by any person upon request seven days after the date of the meeting

(3) Minutes of an Executive Session need not be taken, but if they are, shall not be made public subject to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a). “Executive Session” means a session from which the public is excluded, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313. Such private session may only be held for one of the reasons permitted by the statute, and no binding action may be taken in executive session. The law requires the board to conclude that “premature general public knowledge would clearly place the state, municipality, other public body, or person involved at a substantial disadvantage” before voting on executive session in these cases.

G. These Procedural Rules shall be made available on the Fairlee Town website.

H. These Procedural Rules may be amended by majority vote of the Selectboard, and must be re-adopted annually at the organizational meeting in March.